

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration of the subject application, particularly in view of the following remarks. Claims 1-6, 8-12, 14-16 and 26-34 remain in this application.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

The rejection of Claims 1-16 and 26-34 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,681,302 ("Melbye et al.") is respectfully traversed, particularly in view of the following remarks.

The present invention is directed to a stretch edge elastic laminate ("SEEL") material that includes an elastic layer 15 having at least one elastic zone 20 and at least one gasket zone 30. The elastic zone 20 comprises a plurality of elastic filaments 22 substantially aligned in a machine direction and laminated to at least one facing layer 26, 28. The gasket zone 30 is formed or defined by a stretch edge 31 positioned along a length of a lateral edge region of the SEEL material and substantially aligned in a machine direction. The facing material 26 is bonded to a first side of the elastic layer 15 and the second facing material 28 is bonded to a second side of the elastic layer 15 so that a lateral edge of an elastic film or plug 32 is aligned with a lateral edge of each of the first and second facing materials 26, 28, as shown in Fig. 1, to define the stretch edge 31. See Applicants' specification at page 13, line 9 through page 14, line 10.

Melbye et al. teaches an elastic sheet-like composite material comprising a plurality of elongate elastic strands and one or more sheets of flexible material anchored at bonding locations to longitudinally spaced portions of the elastic strands so that arcuate portions of the sheets project from the elastic strands between the bonding locations.

Melbye et al. does not disclose a stretch edge elastic laminate comprising “... *at least one stretch edge positioned along a first lateral edge of the elastic laminate, the at least one stretch edge forming a first gasket zone, and including an elastic film or plug having a width-to-thickness ratio greater than about 5*”, as required by independent Claim 1. Nor does Melbye et al. disclose a disposable garment comprising a stretch edge elastic laminate, wherein the stretch edge elastic laminate comprises “... *an elastic film or plug in at least one lateral edge region of the elastomeric layer, the elastic film or plug having a width-to-thickness ratio greater than about 5; ... wherein a lateral edge of at least one elastic film or plug is aligned with a lateral edge of each of the first and second facing materials*”, as required by independent Claim 26.

As set forth in the DEFINITION section of Applicants’ specification, at page 8, lines 5-14, a “stretch edge” includes an elastic film or plug adjacent to at least one facing layer at one or both edges (i.e. extending all the way to one or both edge boundaries) of the laminate. The elastic film or plug desirably has a thickness

of about 0.003 inch to about 0.015 inch, *and a width-to-thickness ratio of greater than about 5, more desirably greater than about 10, still more desirably about 15 to about 80. Filaments, by contrast, typically have a width-to-thickness ratio not more than about 2.*

Melbye et al. instead teaches a composite material including a plurality of elastic strands and one or more sheets of flexible material anchored at bonding locations to longitudinally spaced portions of the elastic strands so that arcuate portions of the sheets project from the elastic strands between the bonding locations.

For these reasons, Applicants submit that Claims 1-16 and 26-34 are patentable over Melbye et al. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Request For Telephone Interview

Applicants' undersigned attorney requests a telephone interview with the Examiner. The undersigned requests this interview if the arguments are not deemed sufficient to place the application in condition for allowance. If the Examiner feels the claims are not allowable for any reason, then please telephone the undersigned, Eric T. Krischke, at 847.490.1400.

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CONCLUSION

Applicants sincerely believe that this Patent Application is now in condition for allowance and, thus, respectfully request early allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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